What is claimed is:

1.   A method for mapping objects onto a lightweight directory access protocol repository, comprising:

       requesting that an object be stored in a lightweight directory access protocol ("LDAP") repository, wherein the object includes attributes and is used in an object-oriented programming application;

       retrieving a list of persistent attributes from the object, wherein the persistent attributes are a subset of the attributes and wherein the persistent attributes each comprise a persistent attribute value;

       determining a path, wherein the path identifies a location in the LDAP repository;

       retrieving the persistent attribute values from the object; and

       storing the object in the LDAP repository so that the persistent attributes are stored in a format that is useable by applications other than the object-oriented programming application.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein storing the object in the LDAP repository comprises:

       mapping the persistent attributes to LDAP attributes;

       passing the persistent attribute values to the LDAP repository;

       storing the persistent attribute values in the LDAP attributes at the path based on the mapping.

3.   The method of claim 2, wherein the persistent attributes each have a name and wherein mapping the persistent attributes to LDAP attributes comprises adding a prefix to the persistent attribute name.

4.   The method of claim 3, wherein the prefix identifies the object-oriented programming application and an organization.

5.   The method of claim 2, wherein the persistent attribute values are passed to the LDAP repository as an LDAP object comprising the LDAP attributes and the persistent attribute values.

6.   The method of claim 1, wherein the object-oriented programming application has a name and the object has a name and wherein the path includes the object-oriented programming application name, a container name and the object name.

7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the object represents one of the following: a user, a node, a node group, a role or a tool.

8.   The method of claim 1, wherein the objects are Java objects.

9.   The method of claim 1, wherein the object-oriented programming application is implemented in Java.

10.   The method of claim 9, wherein the persistent attribute values are retrieved from the object using Java reflection.

11.   A method for retrieving objects mapped onto a lightweight directory access protocol repository, comprising:
        requesting that an object be retrieved from a lightweight directory access protocol ("LDAP") repository, wherein the object includes attributes and is used in an object-oriented programming application;
        retrieving a list of persistent attributes from the object, wherein the persistent attributes are a subset of the attributes and the persistent attributes each comprise a persistent attribute value;
        determining a path, wherein the path identifies a location in the LDAP repository;
        retrieving the persistent attribute values from the location in the LDAP repository identified by the path; and
        setting the persistent attributes in the object with the retrieved persistent attribute values.

12.   The method of claim 11, wherein retrieving the persistent attribute values from the LDAP repository comprises invoking an LDAP read method and passing the path with the read method invocation to the LDAP repository.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the objects are Java objects.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein the object-oriented programming application is implemented in Java and wherein Java reflection is used to implement the setting step.

15. A computer readable medium containing instructions for mapping objects onto a lightweight directory access protocol repository, by:

    requesting that an object be stored in a lightweight directory access protocol ("LDAP") repository, wherein the object includes attributes and is used in an object-oriented programming application;

    retrieving a list of persistent attributes from the object, wherein the persistent attributes are a subset of the attributes and the persistent attributes each comprise a persistent attribute value;

    determining a path, wherein the path identifies a location in the LDAP repository;

    retrieving the persistent attribute values from the object; and

    storing the object in the LDAP repository so that the persistent attributes are stored in a format that is useable to applications other than the object-oriented programming application.

16. The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein storing the object in the LDAP repository comprises:

    mapping the persistent attributes to LDAP attributes;

    passing the persistent attribute values to the LDAP repository;

    storing the persistent attribute values in the LDAP attributes at the path based on the mapping.

17. The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the objects are Java objects.

18. The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the object-oriented programming application is implemented in Java and the persistent attribute values are retrieved from the object using Java reflection.

19.   A computer system that supports mapping objects onto a lightweight directory access protocol repository, comprising:

a lightweight directory access protocol ("LDAP") repository;

a processor that runs an object-orient programming application, wherein the object-oriented programming application generates:

an object, wherein the object includes attributes and is used in an object-oriented programming application;

a persistent data manager, that acts as a layer between the object and the LDAP repository, wherein the persistent data manager stores the object in the LDAP repository by:

retrieving a list of persistent attributes from the object, wherein the persistent attributes are a subset of the attributes and the persistent attributes each comprise a persistent attribute value;

determining a path, wherein the path identifies a location in the LDAP repository;

retrieving the persistent attribute values from the object; and

storing the object in the LDAP repository so that the persistent attributes are stored in a format that is useable to applications other than the object-oriented programming application.

20.   The computer system of claim 19, wherein storing the object in the LDAP repository comprises:

mapping the persistent attributes to LDAP attributes;

passing the persistent attribute values to the LDAP repository;

storing the persistent attribute values in the LDAP attributes at the path based on the mapping.